DOOMWAR

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DOOMWAR

PART 3:

DOCTOR DOOM HAS DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE: HE HAS CONQUERED THE WARRIOR NATION OF WAKANDA, HOME OF THE BLACK PANTHER AND THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEPOSIT OF VIBRANIUM, THE RAREST OF ALL METALS. WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES, DOOM FUNDED A DISSIDENT GROUP, THE DESTURI, AND SUPPORTED THEM IN A COUP TO TAKE CONTROL OF WAKANDA.

BUT DOOM ISN'T IN THIS FOR CONQUEST, AT LEAST NOT ON A NATIONAL SCALE. HE HAS DISCOVERED SPECIAL MYSTICAL PROPERTIES OF VIBRANIUM THAT WILL GIVE HIM UNLIMITED POWER—POWER ENOUGH TO CONQUER THE ENTIRE WORLD. ONE BY ONE, DOOM HAS DEFEATED THE DEVIOUS LOCKS SET BY T'CHALLA TO PROTECT THE VIBRANIUM VAULT, FORCING STORM, QUEEN OF WAKANDA, TO HELP HIM ALONG THE WAY.

WHILE THE ELITE WOMEN-WARRIORS KNOWN AS THE DORA MILAJE FACE THE WHOLE OF THE WAKANDAN ARMY AND NAVY, SHURI, THE CURRENT BLACK PANTHER, AND T'CHALLA, ALONG WITH THE X-MEN WOLVERINE, COLOSSUS, AND NIGHTCRAWLER, LAY SIEGE UPON THE ROYAL PALACE IN A RACE AGAINST TIME TO SAVE STORM AND PREVENT DOOM FROM BREAKING THE FINAL LOCK. BUT THEY ARE TOO LATE: BY THE TIME T'CHALLA REACHES THE VIBRANIUM VAULT, DOOM HAS TAKEN IT ALL.

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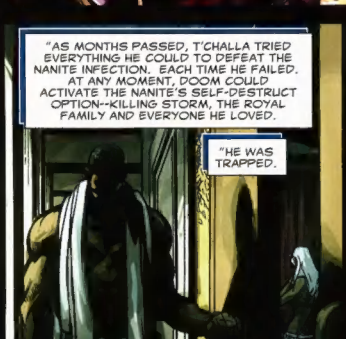
IT STARTED WITH AN ACT OF MURDER.
SHURI--CURRENT BLACK PANTHER
PRINCESS REGENT OF WAKANDA.
THE SKRULL WAR LEFT THE GLOBAL SITUATION UNSTABLE. DOCTOR DOOM USED THAT TO MAKE A POWER MOVE. HE TRICKED MY BROTHER, T'CHALLA, INTO A COVERT MEETING, AND ATTACKED HIM.
T'CHALLA'S DORA MILAJE BODYGUARDS DIED PROTECTING HIM.
"IT WAS A MIRACLE THAT T'CHALLA SURVIVED, HIS LIFE SAVED THROUGH SCIENCE, MAGIC, AND THE UNCONQUERABLE LOVE OF HIS WIFE, QUEEN ORORO.
"BUT AT A PRICE. HIS INJURIES WERE TOO DREADFUL. EVEN WITH THE BEST MEDICAL ATTENTION ON EARTH, T'CHALLA MIGHT NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO WEAR THE MANTLE OF THE BLACK PANTHER.
"FOR GOOD OR ILL, THAT RESPONSIBILITY FELL TO ME. IT IS A DUTY I DO NOT TAKE LIGHTLY."

"DOOM'S PLAN WAS FAR MORE THAN A SIMPLE ATTACK. HE INFECTED MOST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND MANY TOP AIDES WITH NANITES--MICROSCOPIC DEVICES THAT RELAYED EVERYTHING THAT THE INFECTED HEARD OR SAID.
"WHICH MEANT THAT DOOM NOW KNEW ALL OF OUR SECURITY AND MILITARY SECRETS.
"T'CHALLA AND I WERE AMONG THE FEW UNINFECTED.

"UNABLE TO ENLIST THE AID OF HIS WIFE OR HIS OWN MILITARY, T'CHALLA--A MAN OF SCIENCE--TURNED TO MAGIC TO COUNTER DOOM'S SORCERY. ALCHEMY AND ANCIENT MAGICKS GAVE HIM ENHANCED STRENGTH AND A RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ATTACKS.

"AN ATTACK BY DOOM WAS INEVITABLE. T'CHALLA NEEDED MUSCLE, AND HE TURNED TO THE DORA MILAJE--A CULT OF WARRIOR WOMEN DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE ROYAL FAMILY.
"FIGHTING MISTRESS ANEKA DEVISED A NEW FORM OF COMBAT THAT BLENDED SCIENCE AND SORCERY WITH THE MOST VICIOUS OF FIGHTING SECRETS.


"AS MONTHS PASSED, T'CHALLA TRIED EVERYTHING HE COULD TO DEFEAT THE NANITE INFECTION. EACH TIME HE FAILED. AT ANY MOMENT, DOOM COULD ACTIVATE THE NANITE'S SELF-DESTRUCT OPTION--KILLING STORM, THE ROYAL FAMILY AND EVERYONE HE LOVED.
"HE WAS TRAPPED.

"DOOM PLAYED THIS WHOLE THING LIKE A CHESS MASTER--SUBTLY CALCULATING EACH MOVE.
"INSTEAD OF OPENLY ATTACKING WAKANDA, HE COVERTLY FUNDED THE DESTURI, A DISSIDENT GROUP DEDICATED TO CIVIL UNREST."

"DOOM'S ALLY IN THIS WAS THE BROKER--A.K.A. WALTER DECLUN, FORMER CEO OF DAMAGE CONTROL, WHOSE MUTANT GROWTH HORMONES HELPED BRING ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR. DECLUN LAID A TRAIL OF DISINFORMATION THAT SENT ME CHASING MY TAIL.
"WHILE TRYING TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH, I WAS TRICKED INTO ATTACKING NAMOR. A PAINFUL MISTAKE ON MY PART.
"LUCKILY, T'CHALLA HAS SOME ALLIES IN THIS WAR. TOGETHER, WE ATTACKED THE BROKER. BUT EVEN THAT BATTLE WAS PART OF DOOM'S CHESS GAME, KEEPING US OFF BALANCE AND DISTRACTED.
"AT DOOM'S COMMAND, THE DESTURI ROSE AND OVERTHREW WAKANDA IN A WELL-COORDINATED COUP, AND PUT STORM ON TRIAL FOR HER LIFE.
"WHILE WE SCRAMBLED TO MAKE A COUNTER-MOVE, DOOM ACTED TO ACCOMPLISH HIS TRUE END GAME: TO ACQUIRE THE STOCKPILES OF REFINED VIBRANIUM UNDER THE ROYAL PALACE, BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.
"DESPERATE NOW, T'CHALLA AND I WENT TO UTOPIA TO PLEAD OUR CASE TO CYCLOPS: WITH THE X-MEN, WE COULD TAKE BACK WAKANDA.
"CYCLOPS WAS RELUCTANT TO COMMIT HIS PEOPLE. ONLY THREE ANSWERED THE CALL."

"THE DORA MILAJE SQUARED OFF AGAINST THE COMBINED MIGHT OF THE WAKANDAN MILITARY.
"ANEKA LED FIVE HUNDRED WARRIORS INTO BATTLE AGAINST SEVENTY THOUSAND WAKANDAN TROOPS--
"--WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THE X-MAN NIGHTCRAWLER TELEPORTED T'CHALLA AND ME INTO THE PALACE, RIGHT INTO THE THRONE ROOM--
"--AND WE TOOK BACK WHAT WAS OURS.
"WITH THE LEADERS OF THE DESTURI GONE, THE INSURRECTION LOST ITS MOMENTUM. LOYAL WAKANDANS ROSE UP AGAINST THE DESTURI.
"THE WHOLE BATTLE COULD HAVE BEEN WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER--BUT DESPITE DOOM'S WORST INTENTIONS, OUR NATION DID NOT DROWN IN THE BLOOD OF OUR PEOPLE."

"T'CHALLA FOUGHT HIS WAY THROUGH HUNDREDS OF DESTURI AGENTS AND DOOMBOTS TO REACH THE VIBRANIUM VAULT. HE HAD RIGGED THE VAULT WITH A DOZEN LOCKS, EACH OF THEM MORE DEVIOUS THAN THE LAST.
"BUT DOOM--AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SEEMS--DEFEATED ALL OF THEM AND STOLE EVERY LAST OUNCE OF VIBRANIUM.
CHECKMATE
"SO...WITH THE NANITE INFECTION STILL THERE AND NO RECOURSE LEFT, I ORDERED THE AIR FORCE TO CARPET BOMB THE CAPITAL WITH EMPS--EFFECTIVELY BLASTING WAKANDA BACK TO THE DARK AGES."
AND NOW, WE TURN TO YOU. AGAIN. DOOM'S OLDEST ENEMIES AND T'CHALLA'S OLDEST FRIENDS.
WE CAN'T BEAT DOOM ALONE--NOT THIS TIME. BUT TOGETHER, WE JUST MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE.
SUSAN STORM
A.K.A. THE INVISIBLE WOMAN
BEN GRIMM
A.K.A. THE THING
JOHNNY STORM
A.K.A. THE HUMAN TORCH
HE STOLE ALL OF THE VIBRANIUM?
REED RICHARDS
A.K.A. MR. FANTASTIC
LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
TEN THOUSAND TONS OF IT. BUT--HOW?
THAT LAST LOCK--THE PURITY ARCH--WAS A KIND OF PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL POLYGRAPH. IT FORCES A PERSON TO REVEAL HIS TRUE SELF. ANY TRACE OF GUILE, ANY HINT OF DUPLICITY OR EVIL INTENT TRIGGERS A RING OF DISINTEGRATORS.
T'CHALLA--FORMER BLACK PANTHER
FORMER KING OF WAKANDA

"...HOW COULD DOOM--POSSIBLY THE MOST CORRUPT PERSON ON THE PLANET--PASS THAT TEST, I CANNOT BEGIN TO GUESS."
THE VIBRANIUM VAULT.
THIRTY-SIX HOURS AGO.
Y THROUGH PURITY
UMBERED BY PRETENSE
PASS
TINK!
UNGUARDED, NAKED, WEAPONLESS, I OFFER MYSELF UP TO JUDGMENT.
THEN BE JUDGED!
KRAAAAAAACK!

PRINCESS, MY TEAMS ARE WORKING TO RESTORE ORDER. WITH THE SUPPLIES DR. RICHARDS BROUGHT, WE SHOULD HAVE POWER BACK ON WITHIN A DAY.
N'JIX--WEAPONS DESIGNER
CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR TO THE PRINCESS REGENT.
THE CAVES OF BAST.
T'CHALLA'S SECRET COMBAT LABORATORY...
DESTURI STRIKE GROUPS ARE STILL ACTIVE IN THE TERRITORIES. SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN SUICIDE BOMBINGS IN THE MOUNT KANDA SETTLEMENT AND ANOTHER AT A POLICE STATION IN PARADISE FOREST. FOURTEEN CIVILIAN DEATHS.
DAMN.
OUR TEAMS HAVE TARGETED THREE SPLINTER CELLS, PRINCESS. THE PRISONERS COULD TELL US NOTHING OF USE.
THEY COULD BE LYING.
NO. THEY WERE EAGER TO TELL ME EVERYTHING THEY KNEW.
TWO REMOTE POSTS WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED. NO SURVIVORS. HOWEVER, WE RECOVERED THIS FROM ONE OF THE SITES.
DOOMBOT. NOT A PROBLEM. REED'S GOT A BUNCH OF THEM WIRED TO DO OUR LAUNDRY AND BAKE COOKIES. I USE 'EM FOR BOWLING PINS.
T'CHALLA SAYS THAT DOOM HAS DEVISED SOME WAY OF USING SORCERY TO TURN VIBRANIUM INTO A SUPER-WEAPON. HE THINKS DOOM IS GOING TO UPGRADE HIS DOOMBOTS AND MAYBE HIS OWN ARMOR.
OVER THE YEARS WE'VE TRIED TO MASTER THE MYSTICAL PROPERTIES OF VIBRANIUM. WE NEVER COULD. IF DOOM HAS TRULY SOLVED THAT MYSTERY, THEN GOD HELP US ALL...

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. AND I KNOW THAT WHEN I STEPPED THROUGH THAT ARCH, MY LIFE WAS FORFEIT.
BUT KNOW THIS: I GIVE TO YOU WHAT I HAVE GIVEN TO NO ONE ELSE. I OPEN MY MIND AND HEART AND SOUL TO YOU.
IS THAT BRAVERY OR ARROGANCE THAT PUTS SUCH STEEL IN YOUR VOICE?
NEITHER. IT IS *FAITH.*
I KNOW WHO AND WHAT I AM. LOOK INTO MY SOUL, CAT GOD. LOOK AND SEE THE TRUTH THAT IS DOOM.
ARRAAIIIEEE!

IT'S THE WITCH! KILL HER!
LAY DOWN SOME COVER FIRE WHILE I THROW A FORCE FIELD AROUND THE CIVILIANS--
NO! I'VE GOT THIS.
AIIIEEEE!
IT'S NOT NICE TO FOOL WITH MOTHER NATURE.

CAN YOU COUNT THE NUMBERLESS DEAD WHO HAVE PERISHED FOR YOUR DREAMS? CAN YOU TALLY THE HARM YOU HAVE DONE TO THOSE YOU HATE AND THOSE YOU LOVE?
YOU ARE A MONSTER. DOOM.
AND YET, KNOWING THAT ALL OF YOUR CRIMES WOULD BE LAID BEFORE ME, YOU ENTERED THE ARCH OF PURITY.
MY HISTORY IS NO DIFFERENT THAN WAKANDA'S, CAT GOD. I KNOW WHAT YOUR PEOPLE HAVE DONE TO SURVIVE.
YOU SPEAK OF DAMAGE? OF DEATH? WHAT ARE THEY TO KINGS AND GODS? THEY ARE THE EPHEMERAL BY-PRODUCTS OF DESTINY.
DESTINY? DO YOU DARE COMPARE YOUR ENDLESS SCHEMES TO BATTLES FOUGHT TO DEFEND A NATION?
YES.
YOU'VE LOOKED DEEP, CAT GOD, BUT NOT DEEP ENOUGH. LOOK INTO MY SOUL.

A VIBRANIUM TRACKER. I LIKE WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS, T'CHALLA.
ON THE QUANTUM LEVEL, ALL THINGS ARE CONNECTED, AND THE TRACKER WILL KEY INTO VIBRANIUM'S UNIQUE SIGNATURE.
UNIQUE IS HARDLY THE WORD. THERE ARE VERY FEW ELEMENTS THAT COEXIST IN BOTH THE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL. I'M SURPRISED THAT YOU NEVER TOLD [redacted] ABOUT THIS.
REED, YOU ARE MY FRIEND, BUT THIS IS A FIERCELY KEPT STATE SECRET. I WOULDN'T TELL YOU EVEN NOW IF THE WHOLE WORLD WERE NOT IN DANGER.
WELL, I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE THE LAST PERSON TO CONDEMN ANYONE FOR KEEPING SECRETS. I HAVE A FEW OF MY OWN.
STILL, TRACKING THE VIBRANIUM [redacted] ONLY HALF THE BATTLE. DOOM WON'T HAVE TAKEN IT TO LATVERIA. WITH THAT AND TURNING VIBRANIUM INTO A WMD--HE'D BE FACING A COALITION OF EVERY SUPERPOWER ON THE PLANET.
I AGREE. IT'S UP TO US TO HUNT HIM DOWN

MY METHODS ARE A MEANS TO AN END, NO DIFFERENT THAN PRUNING WEEDS IN ORDER TO LET AN ORCHID FLOURISH.
THOSE WHO STAND IN THE WAY OF MY VISION OPPOSE ME BECAUSE THEY FEAR ME. BUT MORE THAN THAT THEY FEAR WHAT I REPRESENT.
CHANGE.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I DESPISE RICHARDS? AND T'CHALLA?
"BECAUSE NEVER ONCE HAVE THEY REINED IN THEIR OWN SELF-RIGHTEOUS ARROGANCE LONG ENOUGH TO TRY AND SEE WHAT I SEE. NEVER ONCE HAVE THEY ASKED ME: WHY?
"DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?"
LOVE.
"MEASURE MY CRIMES AGAINST WHAT MANKIND DOES TO ITSELF, AND I AM A SAINT."

"HOMO SAPIENS ARE A PREDATOR SPECIES. IT'S WHAT BROUGHT US DOWN FROM THE TREES, AND IT'S WHAT WILL ULTIMATELY REDUCE US TO A HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE IN COSMIC HISTORY.
"I AM MORE THAN A SCIENTIST, MORE THAN THE POWER-HUNGRY DESPOT THAT RICHARDS AND THE OTHERS PAINT ME AS. I AM A SORCERER.
"I HAVE LOOKED INTO THE FUTURE, I HAVE SEEN HOW ONE VIOLENT ACTION AFTER ANOTHER SPINS THE WORLD TOWARD A FUTURE WHERE ALL THAT REMAINS OF EARTH IS A BURNED OUT CINDER.
"EVERY TIME I HAVE LOOKED INTO THE FUTURE, THAT IS WHAT I HAVE SEEN.
"EVERY TIME BUT ONE.
"IN ONE POSSIBLE FUTURE MANKIND BECOMES UNITED.
"CURES FOR ALL DISEASES ARE FOUND. GLOBAL CONFLICT ENDS. HUNGER IS ABOLISHED, EDUCATION IS UNIVERSAL, AND NO ONE GOES WITHOUT.
"IN THAT WORLD, THERE ARE LAWS. TO BREAK EVEN THE SLIGHTEST OF THESE IS TO SUFFER IMMEDIATE AND TERMINAL PUNISHMENT. AFTER A WHILE, NO ONE WOULD DARE LAY HANDS UPON THE INNOCENT, OR COMMIT A CRIME OF HATE, OR STEAL BREAD FROM THE TABLE OF ANOTHER."

THERE ARE FIVE KINDS OF VIBRANIUM ON EARTH--SOME IN THE ANTARCTIC, SOME IN THE SAVAGE LAND, AND OTHER SMALLER AMOUNTS. EACH IS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT IN COMPOSITION AND PROPERTIES TO OUR OWN. THE V-TRACKER WILL ONLY TARGET THE REFINED VIBRANIUM FROM WAKANDA.
AS WE SURMISED, DOOM HASN'T TAKEN THE METAL TO LATVERIA--HE'S SPREAD IT AROUND THE WORLD.
SO FAR WE'VE IDENTIFIED SIXTEEN LOCATIONS, MOST OF WHICH CAN BE TRACED BACK TO ONE MAN:
THE BROKER.
DOOM ALWAYS HAS A NUMBER OF CAMPAIGNS GOING AT ONCE, BUT OUR SPIES IN LATVERIA HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE HIS PRODUCTION FACILITIES. OR TRACK HIS FINANCES. NOW WE KNOW WHY.
THE BROKER HAS BEEN MANAGING DOOM'S GLOBAL NETWORK. ESSENTIALLY WE'RE SEEING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS DOOM TO KEEP GOING.
ZAKAR
CHIEF OF WAKANDAN SECURITY
RETRIEVING THE VIBRANIUM WILL GIVE US A CHANCE TO CRIPPLE DOOM'S NETWORK AND DESTROY HIS SUPPORT SYSTEM.
WE CAN'T GIVE HIM A MINUTE'S REST. WE HAVE TO HIT NOW AND HIT HARD SO THAT HE CAN'T USE THE VIBRANIUM BEFORE WE CAN TAKE IT BACK.
ANY QUESTIONS?
JUST ONE.
WHEN'S CLOBBERING TIME?

"THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF VIBRANIUM IS ON EASTER ISLAND.
"THAT'S OUR FIRST TARGET."
SIX QUINJETS HEADING OUR WAY AT MACH SIX. ALMOST THREE MINUTES SOONER THAN THE GOOD DOCTOR PREDICTED.
I'M VERY NEARLY IMPRESSED.
IT'S NICE WHEN VICTIMS ARE PUNCTUAL. SHOWS GOOD MANNERS.
MR. TICKLE
PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE BROKER
YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THIS. I MEAN... REALLY, IT'S SO RARE YOU GET TO USE ONE OF THE TRULY CLASSIC LINES.
JUST SAY IT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
VERY WELL.
"RELEASE THE HOUNDS!"

HEADS UP! WE'VE GOT INCOMING! FIFTY BOGIES ON A TIGHT INTERCEPT COURSE.
OPEN THE HATCH. I GOT THIS.
FLAME ON!
UH-OH. THAT'S HALF-NOVA HEAT AND THAT THING IS SHRUGGING IT OFF.

YOU WOULD SLAUGHTER MILLIONS TO SAVE BILLIONS. YOU WOULD REWRITE HISTORY, WRECK NATIONS, LET YOURSELF BE CALLED A TYRANT AND A MURDERER. ALL TO SATISFY YOUR DREAM OF ONE WORLD UNDER DOOM.
AND YET.
YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY PATH TO SALVATION FOR ALL MANKIND. YOU BELIEVE THAT WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART. EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAVE EVER DONE--YOUR PLOTS AND PLANS AND TWISTED EXCESSES--ALL SERVE THIS ONE GOAL.
I, TOO, HAVE LOOKED INTO THE MILLION PATHWAYS OF THE FUTURE.
I, TOO, HAVE SEEN THE ONE PATH THAT LEADS TO A WORLD WITHOUT EVIL, WITHOUT HURT, WITHOUT WANT. AND THOUGH MY OWN SOUL CRIES OUT IN DENIAL, I MUST ACT ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH.
THOUGH YOUR METHODS ARE ABHORRENT AND VILE, YOUR INTENT IS PURE.
YOU HAVE PASSED THE TEST. THE VIBRANIUM IS YOURS TO TAKE...

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN of MARVEL®

Throughout 2010, Marvel is proud to shine the spotlight on our rich cast of female super heroes as well as the women working in comics today. Every month look to this page for a new interview with one of the top women in comics today.

MARVEL: *First of all, who is your favorite Woman of Marvel?*

MARJORIE LIU: Oh, gosh! Ask the hard question! I admit to having a special fondness for Jubilee. I was introduced to the X-Men through the cartoon – way back in the 90's – and she was the character I identified with the most. I still think she's great – resourceful, spunky, indomitable, impulsive, street smart, a fighter – and a good person, at heart. I've had two chances now to write her in the X-Books, and it was crazy fun.

MARVEL: *Over the years, the women of Marvel have changed & grown, becoming some of the strongest characters in the world of super heroes. Is there a defining moment for you regarding any of our super heroines?*

ML: It's hard for me to pin down just one thing, because there are so many arcs and moments that have captured my imagination – Jean Grey and the Phoenix Saga, Rogue and her continuing battle over touch and intimacy, Jubilee and her adventures with Wolverine and Gambit...

Guts, intelligence, resolve – these are all qualities I think of when I consider the women of Marvel – and what's great is that there are so many of them, and they're visible! It's one of the reasons I love writing here.

MARVEL: *Black Widow is launching as part of Marvel's Heroic Age, with you at the writing helm. What can you tell us about what the future holds for this femme fatale?*

ML: Danger! Thrills! Secrets revealed! Battles to the death!

MARVEL: *Not only is Natasha getting her own ongoing series, but Scarlett Johansson is playing her in* ***IRON MAN 2****. What is it about Black Widow that makes her so popular?*

ML: She lives by a code of honor, she's ruthless, dangerous – can walk into any situation and own it – and she's a Russian spy. Now, maybe it's the influence of all those James Bond movies I watched growing up, but as far as I'm concerned, there's nothing more mysterious or alluring than the femme fatale working for Mother Russia – armed to the teeth, living life on the very edge, and looking good while kicking bad guys in the face.

MARVEL: *You've written a number of comics in the Marvel U, but you're also very well known in the book world as a* ***New York Times*** *best selling novelist, with two different series – **Dirk & Steel and Hunter Kiss**. What would you say your approach is when it comes to writing novels vs. comics?*

ML: My approach really isn't that different. It's still storytelling. In a way, I'd say that writing novels is harder, simply because a) they're longer, and b) you don't have an artist to rely on when you need to convey emotion, a scene, even the clothes the characters are wearing. As a novelist, I have to spell all that out – or at least, imply it. It's a lot more work, but incredibly satisfying because you can really delve deeply into your characters in ways that are a bit more difficult to do when writing a comic. In comics, the emphasis (to me) weighs more heavily on the side of dialogue. And there are challenges to comics because each issue is only twenty-two pages long, so you really can't waste any words or scenes.

MARVEL: *Finally, what would you say to those female fans & creators who still think there is a "glass ceiling" or that comics is strictly a boy's club? Any advice for breaking in?*

ML: When it comes to publishing, what people forget is that no one sees you, and no one cares what you look like (or whether, to quote the great Samantha Carter of Stargate, your "reproductive organs are on the inside instead of the outside." What you're graded on is the quality of your work and how well you sell. Also, it helps not to be a jerk – but good sales will always trump even the most egregious displays of jerkitude.

As for getting my foot in the door...I did so through an X-Men novel I wrote for Pocket, called Dark Mirror. That's not the way most people are going to break in, though. As a writer, you really need to be published before you can approach the editors. You need to show them a solid example of your work – even if it's a web comic drawn with stick figures. The important thing to convey is that you understand the medium, and that you've got the chops to do some good with it.

Personally, I think it's harder for writers to break in. Artists, at least, have portfolios, but the road is trickier for writers. If you want it badly enough, though – as with all things in life – you can make it happen.

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